

Testimony before the CGA Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing on Proposed FY 23 Adjustments for Higher Ed Agencies
February 22, 2022
Submitted by Jamie Czikowsky

Thank you, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representatives Dathan and Nolan, and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Jamie Czikowsky. I am a resident of Hartland, CT and a student at Tunxis Community College in Farmington, CT.

There have been severe misallocations of funding by the Board of Regents for Tunxis and the other eleven community colleges. When president Cheng announced at the student advisory committee on February 11th that tuition was going to be increased by over 200 dollars, he said the reason for this was because of the 'system financial challenges' and the 'consistently declining enrollment since 2010'.

He also said that, despite this decrease in tuition revenue, they have 'maintained the same level of faculty and staff and other sunken costs since 2010' which is factually untrue. There has been a 30% faculty and staff decrease since 2016 just as the student race demographic has become majority Black and Brown students.

The lie that President Cheng and the Board of Regents are pushing about racial equity sounds like "the central aim of CT State (which will be the new name of the College after the consolidation) is to address systemic inequities – both between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds and between institutions."

To say that the system financial challenges are due to the consistent decline in enrollment is not true. Money is there, it's just spent hiring administrators and managers with six figure salaries. Not to mention, over ten million dollars have already been spent on the consolidation transition, when the BOR said the transition was going to cost nothing.

And to say that, despite the decrease in student enrollment, the BOR has kept on nearly all of its faculty and staff is untrue. This lie of equity is enforced by Black and Brown students paying more money per semester, for fewer faculty and staff resources.

I am strongly against the tuition increase because of the reasons I have just spoken about. Students are not responsible for the financial mismanagement of the BOR and higher offices.

Thank you for your support of public higher education in CT.